

FILED IN OPEN COURT  
DATE: 4/29/19  
DEPUTY CLERK

IN THE  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA  
CHARLOTTESVILLE DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA : Criminal No. 3:18 CR 00025 (NKM)  
:  
v. :  
:  
THOMAS WALTER GILLEN :  
:

STATEMENT OF OFFENSE

The offenses described below occurred within the Western District of Virginia, as well as other districts. This Statement of Facts briefly summarizes the facts and circumstances surrounding the defendant's criminal conduct. It does not contain all of the information obtained during this investigation and applicable to an accurate Presentence Report and Sentencing Guidelines calculation.

This statement of facts is not protected by proffer agreement or any other agreement, and shall be wholly admissible at trial in the event this plea is later withdrawn notwithstanding any Rules or statutes to the contrary, including but not limited to, Federal Rules of Evidence 408 and 410, and Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11.

In early 2017, the defendant Thomas Walter Gillen and other individuals participated in an organization originally known as the "DIY Division" that was later re-branded as the "Rise Above Movement" or "RAM." RAM was located in the greater Los Angeles, California area and represented itself as a combat-ready, militant group of a new nationalist white supremacy and identity movement. RAM regularly held hand-to-hand and other combat training for RAM members and associates to prepare to engage in violent confrontations with protestors and other individuals at purported "political" rallies. They attended these rallies with the intention of provoking physical conflict with counter-protestors, which they believed would justify their use of force against the counter-protestors and shield them from prosecution for their acts of violence. RAM leaders organized the training sessions and attendance at political rallies through phone calls and text messages. In 2017, the defendant attended several such combat training events and rallies.

Through various social media platforms, RAM would publicly post photographs of its members with their faces partially concealed. These photographs would be accompanied by statements such as "When the squad[']s not out smashing commies." The defendant posed in some of these group photographs.

Defendant's Initials: 

## **I. Huntington Beach, California on March 25, 2017**

On March 25, 2017, the defendant attended a political rally in Huntington Beach, California along with several RAM members. At that event, several RAM members pursued and assaulted protestors and other persons. Following that rally, photographs depicting RAM members assaulting protestors and other persons were covered on the news and on various Neo-Nazi, white supremacist websites. RAM members celebrated this coverage, and used the Internet to post statements, photographs, and videos of assaults committed by RAM members at this rally in order to recruit members to engage in violent confrontations at future events.

## **II. Berkeley Riots on April 15, 2017**

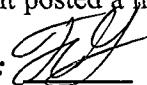
On or about April 15, 2017, the defendant attended a purported political rally in Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park in Berkeley, California.

Prior to the event, on or about April 14, 2017, a fellow RAM member, using a debit card, reserved and rented a van from Airport Van Rentals located at the Los Angeles International Airport to transport the defendant and other RAM members from southern California to Berkeley, California. On the evening of Friday, April 14, 2017, the defendant and eight other RAM members drove to Berkeley, California.

On April 15, 2017, the defendant and other RAM members attended the rally. Throughout the day, there were several violent clashes between some rally attendees and some individuals protesting the rally. In one of the first such instances, RAM members crossed the barrier separating the attendees and protestors, and assaulted protestors. As the rally broke up, rally attendees and protestors dispersed onto the streets of downtown Berkeley. The defendant, alongside other RAM members, followed a group of protestors who were leaving the area. In at least one instance, the defendant – with other RAM members – attacked a protestor, punching him several times and stomping on him once. The defendant's encounter was captured on video and subsequently posted to YouTube. These acts of violence were not in self-defense.

On April 16, 2017, in a text message to a friend, the defendant shared a YouTube video of the aforementioned encounter showing him punching and stomping on a protestor. In the text message, the defendant identified himself: "20 seconds in I'm in the grey shirt tuning up a commie."

Following the rally, photographs depicting defendant and other RAM members assaulting protestors and other persons were covered on the news and on various Neo-Nazi, white supremacist websites. RAM members celebrated this coverage, and used the Internet to post photograph and videos of assaults committed by RAM members in order to recruit members to engage in violent confrontations at future events. For example, on May 15, 2017, the RAM Instagram account posted a photograph of a RAM member wearing a black skull mask at the Berkeley event along with the comment, "#rightwingdeathsquad." On January 10, 2018, the RAM Twitter account posted a message describing itself as "the only alt right crew that actually

*Defendant's Initials:* 

beats antifa senseless and wins rallies.” On February 14, 2018, the RAM Gab account posted a photograph of a RAM member punching a protestor at the Berkeley event along with the text, “Talk shit get hit!”

Because one of the RAM members had broken his hand by punching someone in Berkeley, future RAM trainings events would include training on using “palm strikes” and elbows. Over the summer of 2017, the defendant attended these trainings to prepare for future rallies.

### **III. Travel to Charlottesville in August 2017**

In or around the spring and summer of 2017, an event referred to as the “Unite the Right” rally was organized and scheduled to occur on August 12, 2017, at Emancipation Park in Charlottesville, Virginia. This rally was widely promoted on social media and internet sites associated with white-supremacist individuals and groups, and was scheduled to feature a lineup of well-known white-supremacist speakers.

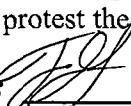
On or about July 29, 2017, the defendant, using his credit card, purchased a one-way ticket from American Airlines for commercial flights from Los Angeles International Airport in California to Charlottesville Albemarle Airport in Charlottesville, Virginia, departing on August 11, 2017. On August 11, 2017, the defendant boarded his flight and traveled from California to Charlottesville, Virginia, landing at approximately 2:25 p.m. (EST). At the time of his travel, the defendant expected that either he or his fellow RAM members (some of whom were also traveling to Charlottesville) would engage in violent confrontations with protestors or other individuals at the upcoming events in Charlottesville.

In anticipation of these confrontations, after arriving in Charlottesville, RAM members purchased athletic tape at the Wal-Mart to wrap their fists in order to prevent their hands from breaking when they punched someone.

### **IV. The Torch-Lit March at the University of Virginia on August 11, 2017**

On August 11, 2017, the evening prior to the scheduled Unite the Right rally, hundreds of individuals, including the defendant and fellow RAM members and associates, were gathering to engage in a torch-lit march on the grounds of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. At a nearby field where the group was gathering, the defendant and fellow RAM members and associates lined up in formation, lit their torches, and waited for the march to commence.

Throughout the march, the participants engaged in chants promoting or expressing white supremacist and other racist and anti-Semitic views, such as “Blood and soil!” and “Jews will not replace us!” The march culminated near the University of Virginia’s Rotunda, where a smaller group of individuals, including University of Virginia students, had gathered around a statue of Thomas Jefferson to protest the torch-lit march. Members of this group held a banner that read:

*Defendant's Initials:* 

“VA Students Act Against White Supremacy.” Chanting and bearing torches, the march participants encircled the Thomas Jefferson statue and surrounded the protestors. Violence erupted among the crowd, with some individuals punching, kicking, spraying chemical irritants, swinging torches, and otherwise assaulting others, all resulting in a riot as that term is defined under 18 U.S.C. § 2102. During and in furtherance of this riot, RAM members and associates punched and struck multiple individuals with a torch.

#### V. The Unite the Right Rally on August 12, 2017

On the morning of August 12, 2017, multiple groups and individuals espousing white-supremacist and other anti-Semitic and racist views arrived in and around the vicinity of Emancipation Park in Charlottesville, Virginia, to attend the Unite the Right rally. When they showed up to Emancipation Park, the defendant and other RAM members had in fact wrapped their hands with the white athletic tape purchased the day prior. After several instances of violence prior to the scheduled start of the rally, law enforcement declared an “unlawful assembly” and required rally participants to disperse.

One of the first breakouts of violence on the morning of August 12, 2017 occurred on 2nd Street NE, between Jefferson and High Streets, in downtown Charlottesville. The defendant and other RAM members were part of a large group of (over forty) individuals seeking entry to Emancipation Park by way of 2nd Street NE, but were told by members of law enforcement they had to enter from a different location. The group, including the defendant and other RAM members, turned around, lined up, and began to make their way through a group of (over twenty) individuals who had come to the rally to protest against racial and other forms of discrimination.

As they made their way through the group of protestors, the RAM members collectively pushed, punched, kicked, choked, head-butted, and otherwise assaulted several individuals, resulting in a riot. These acts were not in self-defense.

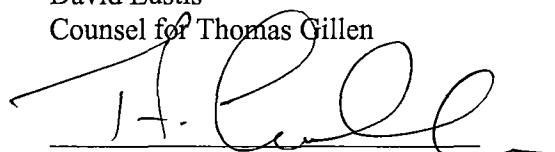
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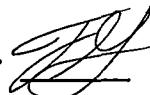
  
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Thomas Walter Gillen  
Defendant

4-18-19  
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David Eustis  
Counsel for Thomas Gillen

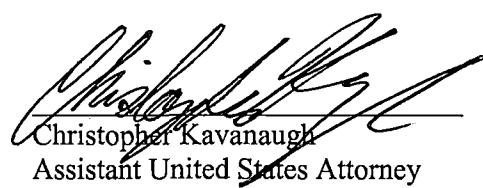
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Thomas T. Cullen  
United States Attorney

Defendant's Initials: 

4-18-19

Date

  
Christopher Kavanaugh  
Assistant United States Attorney

*Defendant's Initials:* \_\_\_\_\_